

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 69

By Finney L

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of the Honorable Walter Baker Harris of Jackson.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of the Honorable Walter Baker Harris; and

WHEREAS, Judge Harris was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, the son of the late Walter Baker Harris, Sr., and Lenella Wallace Harris, Judge Harris was born on July 10, 1931 in Jackson. In his youth, he attended Alexander Elementary School, Jackson Junior High, Jackson High School, and Wharton High School in Wharton, Texas, from which he graduated; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Walter Harris then matriculated to Southwestern University, now Rhodes College, from which he earned his bachelor's degree before attending the University of Tennessee's law school, from which he earned his law degree in 1954; and

WHEREAS, a proud and valorous veteran of this nation's armed forces, Judge Harris dedicated four years in service to the United States Navy before returning to Jackson, whereupon he established a law practice in the firm Schneider and Harris; and

WHEREAS, highly respected within his community, the Honorable Walter Harris was appointed as the Jackson City Judge in 1967 and again in 1971 and, during those terms, he also began serving as juvenile court referee; and

WHEREAS, he was elected by his peers to sit as the County Judge of Madison County, a position which also included the duties of County Executive, in 1972 and, in 1982, was elected as the General Sessions Division II Judge; and

WHEREAS, Judge Harris served that role until his retirement in 1988, after which he served as a part-time judge in Chester County, the Madison County General Sessions Court, and the Jackson City Court; and

WHEREAS, such was the impact of Judge Harris upon his profession and the respect which his peers had for him that the court building in Jackson was renamed as the Walter Baker Harris Juvenile Court Building after his retirement in 1988; and

WHEREAS, a firm believer in the importance of professional involvement, the Honorable Walter Harris dedicated his time and energies to a number of organizations. He rendered sterling service as the Chair of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, as a member of the executive committee of the Tennessee Juvenile Judges Council, and as president of the Tennessee County Judges Association and the Tennessee County Services Association; and

WHEREAS, Judge Harris was deeply devoted to his family, and always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Judge Harris enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Betty Y. Harris, and was the proud father of Tucker Smith, Rhoda Smith, Patrick Youngblood, and Mike Youngblood. He will also be sorely missed by his niece, Vicki Lake, and several grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Walter Harris leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of the Honorable Walter Baker Harris, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Judge Harris.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.